

Museum and Cultural Advisory Board - Meeting Minutes

The Museum and Cultural Advisory Board met in a regular meeting at the Mesa Arts Center, One East Main Street, third floor, south Studios conference room, on November 12, 2008.

Members Present:

Hector P. Benitez	Kent Layton
Douglas Brimhall	Rebecca Nolan
Amanda Buscas	Andrea Soto
Peter G. Cook	Ramona Tecumseh
Daniel (DJ) Harper	

Members Absent:

Lars Nielson, Jr.
S. Vincente Fernandez

Staff Present:

Rob Schultz	Tom Wilson
Jean Kaminski	

Daniel (DJ) Harper, Vice-Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:35 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

Daniel (DJ) Harper, Vice-Chair, started the meeting until Peter Cook, Chair, arrived and called for any corrections/additions/deletions to the minutes of October 8. There being none, Dr. Kent Layton made a motion, Andrea Soto seconded, and all Board members present unanimously approved the minutes of October 8; they are posted on the City's Webpage.

Items from Citizens Present:

There were no citizens present.

Introduce New Board Member Rebecca Nolan – Peter G. Cook

Daniel (DJ) Harper, Vice-Chair, introduced and welcomed new Board member Rebecca Nolan. Ms. Nolan has lived in Mesa for five years and has a strong background in finance. Her previous position was Budget Manager with the Department of Corrections. She is a strong believer in the role arts programming plays within in a community, especially with youth. With the birth of her last child, she became a stay at home mom and wanted to share her passion for the arts and expertise in finance serving as a Board member.

Discuss and Provide Direction – Review Staff Talking Points – Peter Cook

At the previous meeting, the Board requested that staff provide talking points on their related areas, which they did and the respective talking points were included in the Board packets. Daniel (DJ) Harper, Vice-Chair, suggested that the sub-committee (Peter Cook, Daniel (DJ) Harper, Amanda Buscas, and Douglas Brimhall) meet to review the talking points and create a document for the Board's usage and present at the December meeting. The Sub-committee agreed to stay after the meeting to set a date and time.

Note: The meeting date was set for Monday, November 17, 4:00 p.m. at Mesa Arts Center, north Studios conference room.

Staff Reports

Arizona Museum for Youth – Rob Schultz reported for Sunnee Spencer

- Last Sunday's November Target sponsored "3 For Free" event saw over 1,000 visitors at the Museum.
- Opened two exhibitions October 6: "Full Circle: Recycled Into Art," and "Way to Glow! The Art of Scott McNeill."
- "Dia de los Muertos" exhibition is still opened and doing well.
- Sunnee Spencer and Board Chair, Deb Dahl, met with the Arizona Community Foundation to look at funding possibilities for FY09-10.
- The project to do renovation at the Museum through the Cultural Impact Fees has been placed on hold pending the City's budget outcome.

Arizona Museum of Natural History – Tom Wilson

- "MARS!" Opened Friday, November 7. The exhibit is not just about Mars, but looks at Earth through the reflection of Mars and what Mars can tell us about the possibilities for the future of Earth. The exhibit has more interactive activities than any other exhibit at the Museum; created by the exhibitions team. For example, you can see what your weight would be on Mars as compared to Earth and the Museum got the Channel 5 weather man to give a weather report on Mars.
- Dr. Wilson distributed two letters received, which validate the quality of staff at the Museum: 1) Dr. Jerry Howard, Curator of Archeology, was awarded a "Lifetime Contribution to Archaeology" from the Office of Historic Preservation for his tireless efforts in preserving the Mesa Grande mound and his leadership with S.W.A.T. (Southwest Archeology Team) on numerous projects around Arizona that include survey work, excavation, and the stabilization of historic sites such as the old adobe schoolhouses and stagecoach stops. The award was presented by Councilmember Dennis

Kavanaugh and given by Mayor Scott Smith at the November 3 City Council meeting; and 2) Sigma XI, the Scientific Research Society, elected Dr. Robert McCord, Curator of Paleontology, a full member, in recognition of his scholarly and research accomplishments. Dr. McCord has been in the papers many times for his findings in the paleontology field, i.e., the *Rhynchotherium*, the camel *Camelops*, the Gilbert mammoth, and other discoveries that are now on display at, or in the collections of, the Arizona Museum of Natural History. Both are prestigious awards; Dr. McCord and Dr. Howard are a source of pride for the Museum, the Department, and the City of Mesa.

- Last Sunday's November Target sponsored "3 For Free" event saw 2,044 visitors.

Mesa Arts Center/Mesa Contemporary Arts – Rob Schultz

- This year's Storytelling Festival was a success – good crowd and earned back a substantial amount of revenue – no specific numbers available at this time. Received good marketing and P.R. coverage on the event.
- Day of the Dead was also successful with approximately 10,000 attending the two-day event. The event too earned some revenue from booth sales. The sugar skull activity (\$1 to decorate a skull) brought in \$1,300.
- The marquee on the planter facing Center Street has been installed; working on the electronic programming aspect.

Dr. Kent Layton asked if there was a use policy for the marquee. Rob Schultz responded that it is in draft form at this time. The Board requested that they be allowed to see the policy before it is finalized. Mr. Schultz said he would let know Johann Zietsman, Executive Director, know about the request.

It was also asked whether or not there could be cross-over between the Convention Center and Mesa Arts Center on the marquees at both locations? Peter Cook had an exchange with the person who runs the Convention Center marquee suggesting that there be cross-over. His response from that person was that their policy is for Convention Center activity only. Mr. Cook sent Johann Zietsman an e-mail regarding what the Convention Center displays. Mr. Schultz suggested that a copy of the e-mail be forwarded to Randy Vogel.

Director's Report – Rob Schultz reported for Johann Zietsman

- Rob Schultz reported that Mesa Arts Center staff met with Chief Gascon and PD staff to look at community programming and ways their programming and Mesa Arts Center programming could blend. It was a successful meeting and a potential expansion of collaborations with other City Departments.

Amanda Buscas commented that the PD in Colorado engages a theater troupe in training their recruits. Mr. Schultz said that possibility was brought up. Ms. Buscas will forward the name of a contact in Denver so Mr. Schultz can investigate that further.

Douglas Brimhall also noted that in the newspaper article about the collaborative meeting, the Mosaic Program in Tucson was mentioned. That program is a county program working with at-risk youth who do artwork that is displayed. Mr. Brimhall said it was worth the trip to Tucson to see what these kids can produce when given the opportunity.

Dr. Kent Layton asked that since the bonds were passed, would that free up any general fund money that would have been slated for Police and Fire. Mr. Schultz responded, not to his knowledge. If they had not passed, the projects would have been shelved or funded through the general fund at the expense of other areas.

Peter Cook reported that he drafted an e-mail to Vice-Mayor Kyle Jones suggesting that as we now have approval of a secondary property tax to aid the City's Police and Fire budget issues, this might be an opportune time to invoke a secondary property tax provided in previous bonds approved by the voters that have provisions for secondary property tax as a revenue source to pay back those bonds, as paying back the bonds without any reserve has played heavily into the City's budget problems. Why not invoke those additional property taxes to provide the desperately needed budget funding for other City Departments that are under severe constraints? To-date, Mr. Cook has not received a response for the Vice-Mayor.

- The agreement between Mesa Community College (MCC) and Mesa Arts Center has been officially (signed) finalized. The program will continue through the end of this fiscal year and will be re-negotiated next year.

Dr. Kent Layton asked if the agreement was working for Mesa Arts Center. Rob Schultz said that the first year of the agreement, MCC paid a rental fee for the use of our classrooms, the second year they did not, and this year the rental fee is again included in the agreement. With the rental fee, Mesa Arts Center just about breaks even, without the rental fee, Mesa Arts Center saw a loss. The advantage is to have more students on campus and the additional revenue; however, MCC's customer service is not on the same level as what Mesa Arts Center strives for.

Unfortunately, students see that as a Mesa Arts Center service issue and not MCC's; an issue our staff deals with on a regular basis.

Daniel (DJ) Harper pointed out that the decision to negotiate with MCC to offer classes here at Mesa Arts Center was several years ago, and if it was not working out, the Board would assist in any way possible to recommend a change. Mr. Schultz reported that staff had that very discussion with MCC a week or two ago. MCC is facing budget cuts as well and it may be possible to re-think the agreement in the future. Mr. Schultz added that the Board's support and input would be appreciated.

- The Holiday Art and Music Festival will be November 22. Good start to the beginning of the holiday season. This year there will be approximately 70 artist booths as opposed to 40 last year. It will be a fun-filled day for the family.

Dr. Kent Layton said he inquired if the Affiliates could have a table to have information about their organizations and performances, but was told there was no room for another table. Mr. Schultz said he would inquire and get back to Dr. Layton.

- MACFest continues to grow weekly – last week there were 46 artist booths with 44 booked to-date for this coming Saturday. Rental for a sidewalk space is \$15 and the event will run every Saturday (with the exception of November 22) through the end May.
- Johann Zietsman and the R.C. Managers will go to the City Manager on Thursday, November 13, to update him on where the Arts and Cultural Department is proposing the 30% budget cuts he asked for would occur. The proposals will be presented to Council on November 20. Following their review, Council will meet on December 1 and December 4 to finalize the budget cuts. Unfortunately, these cuts require a reduction in staffs.

Ramona Tecumseh asked if a severance package was available for employees. Mr. Schultz replied that all full time and part-time staff has an opportunity to accept a severance package.

The City Manager is talking about re-tooling the way the City is managed. Departments may have to be merged in some areas, some Departments may go away; whatever the outcome, the City's organizational structure will look different from what it is today.

Dr. Kent Layton asked how ticket sales were doing at Mesa Arts Center. Mr. Schultz said that Mesa Contemporary Arts is seeing more visitors than ever before, partly due to Target's "3 for Free," and partly because of the great exhibitions. As far as Mesa Arts Center and the Performing Live season goes, tickets are not meeting expectations; the economy definitely has had an effect. Classes are doing okay, student numbers are down, but revenue is up by approximately 6% because of an increase in registration fees.

Report on Conference and/or Meetings/Performances Attended: Board Members – Information Only

Daniel (DJ) Harper, Vice-Chair, saw Southwest Shakespeare's "As You Like It," which thoroughly impressed him; attended the opening of Mesa Contemporary Arts' "Lowrider" and "Tattoo" exhibits and was pleased to see so many people were on campus; enthusiastic about the MACFest on Saturdays in downtown Mesa; and heartily congratulated Dr. Tom Wilson on the "MARS!" exhibit. He said it was one of the most interesting, fascinating, worthwhile museum endeavors he has been to in his adult life. He has always been impressed with the caliber of exhibits the Museum offers, but this one particularly touched him and he expressed his appreciation.

Peter Cook, Chair, attended the Jerusalem Symphony concert in the Ikeda Theater. He said it was well done and enjoyed the acoustics; he was blown away at how you could hear individual instrument sounds in that theater. "It was a remarkable experience."

Douglas Brimhall enjoyed the Dia de los Muertos festivities at Mesa Arts Center. His daughter attended on Saturday with an aunt. His daughter and was so excited about what she saw and the activities she participated in that the whole family came back on Sunday.

Dr. Kent Layton said he attended the "Lowrider" exhibit as well and found it most interesting. That same evening the Affiliates showcased their season in the theaters free to the public. Dr. Layton enjoyed the diversity of the crowd and the exposure that attendees experienced, from lowriders and tattoos, to ballet and Shakespeare.

Ramona Tecumseh reported that she attended the Veteran's Day parade and the Mesa Pow Wow; both were wonderful.

Dr. Layton was also at the parade and suggested that in the future, possibly there could be some music at Mesa Arts Center during the parade, which lasted three hours and had long intervals between participants in the parade.

Identify Items for Future Agendas

It was requested that an agenda item be added to the December meeting to discuss whether the Board should take a position regarding instituting a secondary property tax, which is part of the language on the previously approved bonds, be on the table to invoke as a consideration in this extreme budget crisis.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Johann Zietsman, Director
Arts and Cultural Department